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Central Intelligence Agency



It's just
a CIA
cover-up
story
says a
Labour
MP

Bob Edwards, M P

ONE OF THE examples given by the CIA report makes a remarkable reference to a British MP. He is Robert (Bob) Edwards, Labour and Co-op member for Bilston and General Secretary of the Chemical Workers' Union. Edwards, who describes himself as a "libertarian socialist," is a former national chairman of the Independent Labour Party, and a veteran of the Spanish Civil War. He has visited Russia: as chairman of delegations in 1928 and 1934, and as one of a party of MPs in 1960. "A Study of a Master Spy" is one of several books he has written. It is about 30,000 words long. This is the extract from the Congressional Record:

13. The measure and depth of department D's activity against the CIA may be judged from a single episode. A booklet attacking the former Director of Central Intelligence, Mr. Allen W. Dulles, entitled "A Study of a Master Spy" (Allen Dulles), was printed and distributed in London during 1961, and has since been reprinted. The ostensible author was a prominent maverick Labor Member of Parliament, one Bob Edwards, who was supposedly assisted in the effort by a British journalist. It is now known that the manuscript was researched in Moscow by a senior KGB disinformation officer, Col. Vasily Sitnikov, and then served up for final polish and printing in the United Kingdom. Mr. Dulles himself discussed this episode on a TV roundtable on March 29, 1964.

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YESTERDAY, Mr Edwards replied to the report: "It is utter nonsense—another CIA cover-up. I have never even heard of Colonel Sitnikov, and it is ridiculous to suggest I 'polished up' someone else's manuscript.

"How did I get my facts? Well, as you know, MPs receive masses of material—through the post and through informants as well as from newspapers—and I keep a file on things that interest me. I began my interest in CIA because I knew, personally, General 'Wild Bill' Donovan who started the CIA. He told me a few things, and I started to keep a newspaper cuttings file.

"Once I started making speeches and writing about the subject, people got to know of my interest and more information began to come in. I talked to three CIA men in London and one of them was an important source. Two German technicians came to see me from Bilbao. Some pretty substantial documents were sent to me—including one on the CIA's activities in British Guiana and one on Algeria. (The British Guiana information was from someone I knew; the Algerian material was anonymous, but it checked with other information I had.)"

When asked what steps he had taken to check on the credentials of his informants and the ultimate source of written information, Mr Edwards replied, "Well you can't just ring up the American Embassy and ask. You've got to weigh up the evidence. Someone used to meeting people and examining documents can always tell if something untrue is being planted. And since my book was published, what it said about how the CIA operates has been proved right over and over again—look at the Bay of Pigs and Singapore."